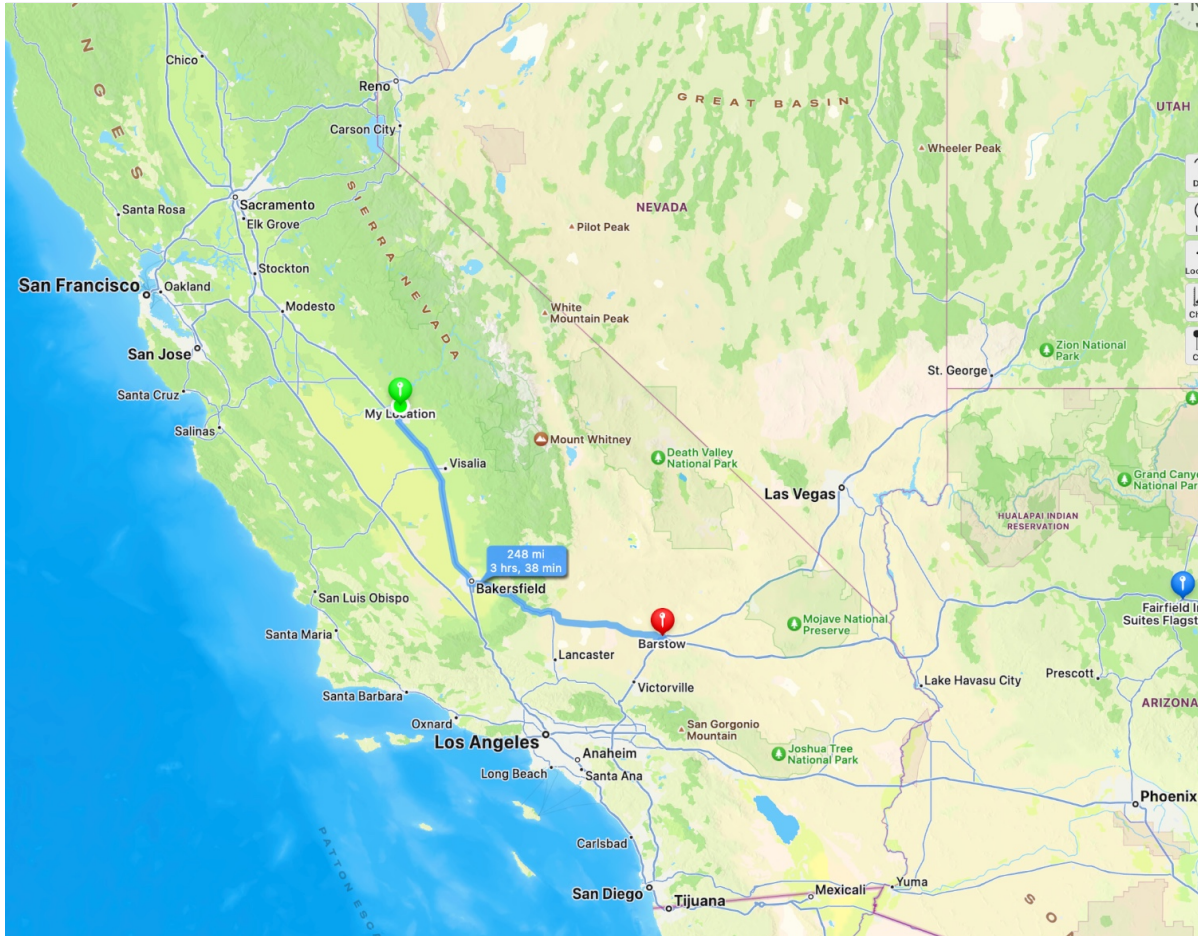


Day One | Roger's Travelers Notebook



And we're off! Our road trip began as we set out from our house in California. We live at an elevation of 364 ft. above sea level. The trip is uphill all the way. We played some piano favorites from Dino Kartsonakis. He will be featured one evening at our Branson conference.

As we were leaving our driveway, the tire pressure light suddenly came on. We promptly turned back and parked in the driveway to check the tire pressure and retrieve the compressor. It turned out that the left rear tire was low, but after inflating it, the light went off. On our way out, we made a quick stop to drop off my truck, which my grandson or his parents could use while we were away. The morning in the valley was hazy, but overall, since we are on a road trip, life is good.

The massive valley (known as the Central Valley) in California covers 20,000 sq. miles. The southern part where we live is called the San Joaquin valley. Lots of stuff (i.e. food and animals) grows in our valley. It stands out in agricultural productivity with over \$50 billion in annual farm related sales.

California gets a bad rap these days all because of politics. Let's set politics aside.

California is one of the most beautiful states in the country.

The deep blue Pacific to the west, the majestic Sierra Nevada mountains to the east, California is gorgeous. The valleys, the deserts, the lakes, and rivers they are all wonderful.

California has some of the tallest peaks in the United States, including Mt. Whitney at 14,505 feet (I climbed it decades ago), and several others that are all over 14,000 feet like, Mt. Williamson at 14,379 feet, White Mountain Peak at 14,246 feet, and North Palisade at 14,242 feet. California also has the lowest point in all of North America, Badwater Basin in Death Valley, at 282 feet below sea level.

California fun fact: Did you know that California has the only Mediterranean climate in the whole USA, and is only one of five climates like it in the entire world?

Our car isn't too packed. We have a couple of suitcases, a few books, physical and Kindle. I'm reading a biography of *John Quincy Adams* by Randall Woods. This is my first time reading Randall Woods. He is an exceptional writer. On my Kindle I'm reading *The President and the Assassin*, by Scott Miller. Miller is also a great writer! His book is about President McKinley and the dawn of the 20th century. I have of course, packed my Bible and a copy of my book *30 Days Through Paul's Letters*. Carol is reading *The Iodine Crisis* by Lynne Farrow. It deals with the problem of the lack of iodine in our American diets. Carol also faithfully writes in her prayer journal every day, and has her Bible with her.

We each have a Yeti travel mug, mine is yellow, Carol's is teal. I started off the trip with some cold brew coffee in mine. Carol likes lemon water. I also have a smaller Yeti coffee mug for morning coffee time in our hotel!

We packed a few things for a snack along the way. Some that need to stay cool, and some that don't; Hard-boiled eggs, cheese, cold brew coffee, Beef Jerky, some pecans and a few other snacks. We have several liters of bottled water (in glass bottles!).

We headed south on a hazy highway 99 towards Bakersfield. From there, we turned eastward out of the valley and through the Tehachapi Pass.

Before crossing the Tehachapi Mountains, we made a quick stop at a nice little farm stand to take a break and grab a bite to eat (tailgating!).



The place seemed quite deserted when we first arrived, but shortly after, a couple of small buses rolled in, carrying passengers from the Bakersfield ARC program.

The passengers were adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and it seemed like they were on a fun field trip. They walked by us as we snacked. I acknowledged one woman as she passed by and she said in an inquisitive and enthusiastic tone, *"It looks like you are on a trip!"* I said, *"Yes, we are going to Missouri."* She exclaimed loudly to the others with her *"They are going to Missouri! That is a long way."* I replied, *"You are on a trip too!"* She said, *"Yes we are."* Another man heard the woman speak to me and turned and said, *"That's a long way!"* I replied, *"It sure is."* It was a brief, yet sweet and kind exchange of words. People, regardless of their shapes, sizes, and mental capacities, are kind and pleasant if we just take a moment to notice them.

The Tehachapi Mountains are at the southern end of the Sierra Nevada mountains. The name is derived from an Indian word originating from the Kawaiisu people, which translates to "hard pass." This is beautiful in some places, but in some areas it is very sad. The beauty has been raped and marred by massive *wind farms*. Apparently, this pass has one of the largest *wind farms* in the U.S. It is really a shame.



At the top of the pass is a small city, Tehachapi city. We have stayed there before, but today we didn't stop.

Leaving the mountains behind, we descended into the Mojave Desert. It is called the high desert. The elevation is around 2,000 feet. The Mojave is huge, like the valley I described

above. It occupies more than 25,000 square miles. It is named for the Mojave people. It was estimated there are still around 2,000 Mojave descendants in the area.

As we entered the windy and dusty desert a large *parking lot* of airplanes appear. Some call it the airplane graveyard or boneyard. Because of the dry arid climate which slows decay, planes are parked here, some for scrap and some for repairs. It is impressive.



Barstow is the first city we reached in the desert and it is here that we'll make our first overnight stop. I asked the desk clerk at our hotel how long he has lived in Barstow. He said, ten years. We had a friendly exchange about where he was from and where he has lived. I asked him if the coffee in the lobby was out early in the morning and he assured me it is!

We watched a Trump rally from Arizona in our room. Go Trump. We read our books and then it was lights out.

Ready to take on a new day tomorrow. Flagstaff bound.

- ☒ Friday **August 23** - Barstow, California
- ☐ Saturday, Sunday **August 24,25** - Flagstaff, Arizona
- ☐ Monday **August 26** - Albuquerque, New Mexico
- ☐ Tuesday **August 27** - Amarillo, Texas
- ☐ Wednesday **August 28** - Weatherford, Oklahoma
- ☐ Thursday **August 29** - Branson, Missouri
- ☐ Friday **August 30** - Branson, Missouri (Conference Begins)
- ☐ Saturday **August 31** - Branson, Missouri
- ☐ Sunday **Sept 1** - Branson, Missouri
- ☐ Monday **Sept 2** - Branson, Missouri (Labor Day - Conference Ends)
- ☐ Tuesday **Sept 3** - Homeward bound itinerary TBD